The Gate of Entry into the Limitless Activities of the Supreme Noble Ones

Lochen Dharmashri

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DEDICATION

This translation is dedicated to the long life of His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche who is dedicating his life to help all sentient beings

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Translator's Introduction

This text written by Lochen Dharmashri is a commentary on The King of Aspiration Prayers for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones. The King of Aspiration Prayers comprises the last chapter of the Gandavyuha sutra, one of the sutras in the Avatamsaka sutra. It is practiced by all the different Buddhist sects in Tibet and is one of the main prayers that is practiced during great gatherings of practitioners such as the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug Monlams. This prayer is also generally practiced at the conclusion of an individual's daily practice.

Why are aspiration prayers recited by Buddhist practitioners? If practitioners recite or chant such a prayer, consisting of the words of the Buddha and the great bodhisattvas, they are reciting words that have tremendous blessing. In that way they will be able to accomplish all of their positive wishes. When we chant and practice the sutras handed down by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas we too are practicing the authentic dharma and will be able to accomplish our wishes.

This aspiration prayer was made by Samantabhadra, one of the eight bodhisattvas of the Buddha. The meaning of this prayer is not part and parcel of our samsaric thinking which is self-centered and is marked by suffering. Instead the meaning of this prayer is connected with the enlightened mind of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Hence, in reciting this aspiration prayer, we make a fundamental connection with the enlightened mind of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. This in turn brings many positive benefits to our day-to-day lives.

The goal of this translation is to convey the meaning of the King of Aspiration Prayers. To the extent that the meaning is actually conveyed, we have been successful in the translation. We have not tried to perform a strict word for word translation of the root text and commentary. At the same time, we have tried to keep our translation as close as possible to the actual wording, while making the meaning clear.

In the root text we typically use the word "I" so that when you chant the Aspiration Prayer, it is a personal experience. In the commentary, on the

other hand, we typically use the word "we." This word usage serves to highlight the boundary between the root text and the commentary.
We have also inserted the root text in appropriate places in the commentary, so that the reader can easily reference the root text when reading the commentary.

1 Root Verses

I pay homage to noble Manjushri Kumara.

To all the Tathagatas without exception,
Those lions of men and women of the three times
Who abide in the countless worlds of the ten directions,
I prostrate inspired by faith with body, speech and mind.

Through the power of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
I manifest in mind all the victorious ones.
Bowing down with bodies as countless as atoms in all the realms,
I fully prostrate to all the victorious ones.

I imagine on a single atom, Buddhas as countless as atoms in the universe,
Each residing with his son and daughter bodhisattvas.
In this way all the realms of the dharmadhatu
Are filled with victorious ones.

With oceans of inexhaustible exaltation
Consisting of all the sounds of oceans of various types of melodies,
I fully express the qualities of all the victorious ones
And praise all the sugatas.

With the finest flowers, the finest garlands,
Music, perfumes, supreme parasols,
Supreme lamps and the finest incense,
I make offering to all the victorious ones.

With the finest clothing, supreme scents,
Heaps of aromatic powders equal in size to Mount Meru and so on,
All displayed in the most sublime of arrangements,
I make offering to the victorious ones.

Supreme victory banners and supreme pennants,
All of these again I offer to the victorious ones.

Through the power of respectful faith in all the victorious ones,
And through the power of trusting faith in excellent conduct,
I prostrate and make offerings unsurpassable and vast
To all the victorious ones.

Through the power of passion, aggression and ignorance,
I have performed harmful actions
With body, speech and likewise mind.
All these actions I confess, each and every one.

I rejoice in all merits,
Those of the victorious ones and their descendant bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
Those of the Pratyekabuddhas, the Shravakas requiring practice, the arhants who no longer need practice,
And those of all beings.

I request all the protectors,
Those beacons of the worlds of the ten directions,
Who have traveled the stages of the path of bodhi and have reached enlightenment free from obscuration,
To turn the wheel of the unsurpassable dharma.

With palms joined, I supplicate
All the Tathagatas who are planning to pass into nirvana,
To remain for as many kalpas as there are atoms in the Buddha realms,
In order to provide benefit and happiness to all sentient beings.

Whatever small virtue I have accumulated,
Through prostration, offering and confession,
Rejoicing, requesting to teach, and supplicating to remain,
I dedicate entirely for the sake of enlightenment.

I make offering to the Buddhas of the past
And to those who reside in the worlds of the ten directions.

May those who have not yet appeared as Buddhas,
Quickly complete their intentions.
May they progress through the stages of enlightenment
And attain buddhahood.

May the countless realms of the ten directions
Be completely transformed into vast and completely pure realms.
May these pure realms be completely filled with Buddhas together with their son and daughter bodhisattvas,
And may each Buddha reside sitting under the greatest of all trees, the tree of bodhi.

May the countless sentient beings of the ten directions
Be free from illness and enjoy happiness at all times.
May all beings who are acting in accord with the goals of the dharma
Be in harmony and may their aspirations be accomplished.

May I perform enlightened activities
And may I recall all my previous lives.
In all of my lives, from birth to death,
May I always be a renunciate.

Training by following the examples of all the victorious ones,
May I completely perfect excellent conduct.
May my activities and discipline be without stain and be completely pure.
May my conduct at all times be free of faults and impairments.

May I teach the dharma
In the language of the gods, in the language of the nagas, in the language of the yakshas,
In the language of the kumbhandas, in the different languages of humans,
And in all the many languages spoken by sentient beings.

With a mind of peace, may I fully exert myself in the paramitas.
May I never forget bodhichitta.
May I completely purify without exception,
All harmful actions and their ensuing obscurations to liberation.

May I be liberated from nonvirtuous actions, kleshas and Mara's activities that obstruct accomplishment,
And may I act for all the beings of this world,

Just like the lotus unstained by mud
And just like the beneficial sun and moon unhindered by space.

May I completely pacify the suffering of the beings of the lower realms
Who in extent would fill all the directions of the Buddha fields.
May I establish all beings in happiness
And bring benefit to all.

May I completely perfect the activities of enlightenment
And engage in harmonious activities in order to ripen sentient beings.
May I fully teach excellent conduct
And perform the sum of the above activities throughout
all future kalpas.

May I always accompany
Those whose good actions are similar to mine.
May our activities and aspirations of body, speech and mind
Be one and the same.

May I always meet those spiritual friends
Who wish to benefit me
And fully teach me excellent conduct.
May I never displease them.

At all times may I see in person the victorious ones,
Those lords who are encircled by their bodhisattvas.
Throughout all future kalpas,
May I tirelessly make a vast variety of offerings to them.

May I retain the authentic dharma of the victorious ones
And thus be able to shed light on all enlightened conduct.
Thoroughly training in excellent conduct,
May I practice it at all times in all future kalpas.

In all my rebirths in samsara,
May I obtain inexhaustible merit and wisdom.
In this way may I become an inexhaustible treasury
Of the qualities of upaya, prajna, samadhi and liberation.

Within a single atom, may I see all the countless Buddha realms.
Within each of these realms may I see the incomprehensible Buddhas
Residing with their son and daughter bodhisattvas.
As they perform enlightened activities may I do so along with them.

Then, in each of the realms in all directions, may space even the size of a tip of a hair
Be filled with realms the size of oceans containing oceans of Buddhas of the three times.
May I fully engage in enlightened conduct together with the Buddhas throughout oceans of kalpas.

Every single teaching of the Buddha appears in languages having oceans of qualities.
It has the qualities of the pure melodic speech of all the victorious ones
And harmoniously satisfies the different wishes of all sentient beings.
May I always listen to the speech of the Buddhas.

All the victorious Tathagatas of the three times
Have fully turned the wheel of the dharma.
May I, through the power of mind, fully enter into
The inexhaustible melodious speech of all the victorious ones.

Just as the Buddhas enter into wisdom in all future kalpas
May I too enter into such wisdom in this very instant.
Combining the entire extent of all the kalpas of the three times
Into a fraction of a single instant, may I perform enlightened conduct wherever I may be.

In this very instant may I see
All the lions of men and women, the Tathagatas of the three times.
May I at all times realize the liberation of the Tathagatas that sees
All objects of experience as illusion.

May I make the Buddha realms of the three times
Manifest within a single atom.
May I then make each atom in all directions without exception
Manifest all the pure realms of the victorious ones.

May I go into the presence of all the present and future lords,
Those beacons who illuminate the world,
Who demonstrate stage by stage the attainment of enlightenment,
Who turn the wheel of the dharma,
And who attain the ultimate complete peace of nirvana.

By way of the power of altogether swift miracles,
The power of the vehicle that traverses the path of complete benefit,

The power of conduct having all excellent qualities,
The power of all pervasive loving kindness,
The power of all virtuous merit,
The power of wisdom that is free from attachment,
And the powers of prajna, upaya and samadhi,
May I perfectly accomplish the power of enlightenment.

May I completely purify the power of karma,
May I fully subjugate the power of the kleshas,
May I render the power of the Maras powerless,
And may I perfect the power of excellent conduct.

May I completely purify oceans of realms,
Completely liberate oceans of sentient beings,
Fully see oceans of dharmas,
Fully realize oceans of wisdom,
Perform oceans of excellent activities completely purifying all faults,
Fully complete oceans of aspirations,
And fully offer to oceans of Buddhas.
May I perform all of these activities without weariness throughout oceans of kalpas.

All the victorious ones of the three times
Have made multitudes of enlightened aspirations.
May I become an enlightened Buddha through performing excellent conduct
Thereby completing all of their aspirations without exception.

The principal son of all the victorious ones
Is the individual named Samantabhadra.
In order to act in the same manner as this master,
I fully dedicate all my virtuous activity.
I also make dedication for pure body, speech and mind,
For pure conduct, and for the complete purification of the realms.
May I be just like the master
In making this excellent dedication.

In order to practice the excellent conduct of the all virtuous dharmas,
May my aspirations be the same as those of Manjushri.
In all future kalpas, may I be without weariness in completing
All the activities of Manjushri.

May my paramita activities be immeasurable.
May my excellent qualities be immeasurable.
Having performed immeasurable activities,
May I attain all the manifestations of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Just as space is without limit
So too are all sentient beings.
Just as their karma and kleshas are without limit,
So, too, may my aspirations be without limit.

Individuals could offer limitless realms of the ten directions
Ornamented with precious jewels to the victorious ones.
They could also offer substances of gods and humans producing supreme delight.
They could make these offerings in numbers as countless as atoms in all the realms over many kalpas.
However, if they were to listen to this king of dedication prayers,
Be motivated to supreme enlightenment,
And then give rise to faith even a single time,
The merit gained would be even more sublime.

If I make this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
I will abandon all rebirths in the lower realms.
I will be free from associating with inappropriate friends
And will quickly see the Buddha Amitabha.
I will completely obtain the supreme attainments,
I will be happy in this life,
And in this present life everything will go well.
In aspiring to be like Samantabhadra,
I will be just like him in a short period of time.
If I perform the five inexpiable sins out of ignorance,
When I recite this Prayer for Excellent Conduct,
I will quickly and completely purify them.
I will attain wisdom, have a beautiful body, possess the major and minor marks,
Be born into an excellent family and be radiant in appearance.
The Maras and tirthikas will not be able to harm me,
And all beings of the three worlds will make offerings to me.
I will quickly go before the Bodhi tree,
And abiding there I will be able to benefit sentient beings.
Having subdued the Maras and their troops,
I will attain enlightenment and fully turn the wheel of the dharma.

If I keep this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct with me
Chant or read it,
I will gain the complete fruition only known by the Buddhas,
The attainment of supreme enlightenment – of this there is no doubt!

Just as Manjushri has supreme knowledge,
So too, has Samantabhadra.
In order to follow in the footsteps of these supreme bodhisattvas,
I fully dedicate all the virtue arising from making this aspiration.

With dedications that are praised as supreme
By all the victorious ones of the three times,
I fully dedicate all of my roots of virtues
In order that all beings attain the conduct of Samantabhadra.

At the time of my death,
May all my obscurations be dispelled.
Having seen Buddha Amitabha in person,
May I instantly go to the pure realm of Sukhavati.

Having gone there, may all the fruitions
Of making this Aspiration Prayer fully manifest.
May all of my wishes and those of others be completely fulfilled,
And may I benefit sentient beings as long as worlds exist.

In that joyous realm having the excellent qualities of the mandala
of victorious Amitabha,
May I take birth on a beautiful lotus.
May victorious Amitabha appear to me in person,
And may I receive a prophecy from him.

Having fully received this prophecy in Sukhavati,
May I emanate many billions of emanations,
And through my intent, may a multitude of benefits
Be performed for sentient beings in the ten directions.

Through whatever small virtue I have accumulated
By reciting this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
May all the positive wishes of sentient beings
And all positive results be accomplished instantly.

The merit obtained through the dedication of this aspiration prayer
for excellent conduct
Is limitless and authentic.
By whatever merit I have so obtained,
May all sentient beings drowning in the river of suffering
Gain complete rebirth in the realm of Sukhavati.

Through this king of aspiration prayers
May all sentient beings receive benefit and attain the greatest
of all attainments.
By accomplishing this aspiration prayer taught by Samantabhadra and
ornamented with Buddha activity,
May the lower realms be completely emptied of beings.

The Aspiration Prayer for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones
is complete.

The Indian scholars Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, the translator Bande Yeshe De and others translated this text from Sanskrit into Tibetan and the great translator, Vairocana, served as the chief editor.

2 INTRODUCTION

I pay homage to all the Tathagatas, their descendents and the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. I pay homage to all the completely perfect Buddhas who arise from the ocean of the two accumulations. I promise to open the hundred gates of entry to their pure realms and activities.

Inside the Avatamsaka[1] sutra, is the Gandavyuha[2] sutra which teaches the all-encompassing activities of the bodhisattvas. The King of Aspiration Prayers is taken from the last chapter of the Gandavyuha sutra.

Long ago the youth Norzang made this aspiration having relied on many spiritual friends, from noble Manjushri up through Maitreya. In so doing, he obtained the vast sphere of wisdom through the power of the blessings of Manjushri and was able to enter the mandala of the activity of Samantabhadra. After the youth Norzang began studying with the spiritual friend, the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Samantabhadra taught him the conduct of the noble ones by means of great clouds of limitless emanations of incomprehensible wisdom activities.

In the Gandavyuha sutra the Buddha spoke these words:

> The bodhisattva mahasattva, Samantabhadra, throughout limitless kalpas has traveled from one world realm to another and has made this aspiration in the melody of verse in order to express that even though the Buddha realms are inexpressible in number, they can be estimated by the number of atoms in the world.

This serves to introduce The King of Aspiration Prayers.

This commentary has three chapters: a beginning chapter, a middle chapter and a concluding chapter.

3 The Beginning Chapter

The beginning chapter has two divisions:

1. The meaning of the title
2. The translator's homage

The Meaning of the Title

In India there are four languages and one of these is Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, the title of the text is:

Arya-Bhadracharya-Pranidhana-Raja

Translated into Tibetan this is:

'Phags pa Bzang po Spyod pa'i Smon lam gyi Rgyal po

The King of Aspiration Prayers for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones

In the title the term excellent can be interpreted in two ways. It can refer to the teachings of the noble one Samantabhadra, and in this way by reciting the sutra one makes aspiration for his conduct. Or the term excellent can refer to the conduct of the bodhisattvas that is virtuous in the beginning, middle and end.

Since this is a great sutra of aspiration that fully gathers all such activities, it is called the "king" of aspiration prayers.

THE TRANSLATOR'S HOMAGE

Before the translator composes a translation, he makes the translator's homage. Here the translator pays homage to the deity of his choice, noble Manjushri Kumara by saying:

I pay homage to noble Manjushri Kumara.

4 The Middle Chapter

The middle chapter has three sections:

1. The preliminary seven branch prayer that purifies one's being
2. The main practice consisting of the very extensive explanation of the aspiration prayer
3. The conclusion that teaches the benefits

The Preliminary Seven Branch Prayer That Purifies One's Being

The preliminary seven branch prayer consists of:

1. Prostration
2. Offering
3. Confession
4. Rejoicing
5. Requesting to teach the dharma
6. Asking to remain
7. Dedication

The Branch of Prostration

There are two sections:

1. The brief discussion
2. The detailed discussion

THE BRIEF DISCUSSION OF PROSTRATION

To all the Tathagatas without exception,
Those lions of men and women of the three times
Who abide in the countless worlds of the ten directions,
I prostrate inspired by faith with body, speech and mind.

The many worlds of the ten directions, wherever they may be, are countless in number. In these worlds, the Tathagatas refer to the Buddhas of the three times who have come before, who are living here now, and who will come subsequently. Since they overwhelm all sentient beings with their brilliance and are free from any timidity, they are known as lions of men and women. The object of homage is all such Buddhas, countless in number without any exception whatsoever. Those who are paying homage are ourselves. How do we pay homage? We do so with great faith and with the full spirit of body, speech and mind.

THE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF PROSTRATION

This has three sections:

1. Body
2. Mind
3. Speech

BODY

Through the power of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
I manifest in mind all the victorious ones.
Bowing down with bodies as countless as atoms in all the realms,
I fully prostrate to all the victorious ones.

In connection with prostrating by means of body the text mentions, "I fully prostrate." Here the object of prostration is the totality of all the Buddhas who are victorious over harmful and nonvirtuous actions. How do we prostrate? We prostrate through the recitation of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct. Then by the power of yearning for enlightened conduct, we will see the manifestation of all Buddhas. Even if we are unable to see them, we will be able to visualize them by manifesting them in our minds. In front of each of these Buddhas we make countless emanations of ourselves, as many as there are atoms within the realms of the ten directions. All of these emanated bodies then fully prostrate.

MIND

I imagine on a single atom, Buddhas as countless as atoms in the universe,
Each residing with his son and daughter bodhisattvas.
In this way all the realms of the dharmadhatu
Are filled with victorious ones.

Imagine that even on top of a single atom abide innumerable Buddhas as countless in number as all the atoms in the universe. Each Buddha is surrounded by his son and daughter bodhisattvas, and they all reside comfortably. In that way, all the realms without exception that pervade dharmadhatu are completely filled with the victorious ones and their descendants. We thus prostrate with a fully stable mind of faith.

SPEECH

With oceans of inexhaustible exaltation
Consisting of all the sounds of oceans of various types of melodies,
I fully express the qualities of all the victorious ones
And praise all the sugatas.

To whom do we offer praise? We offer praise to all the Sugatas.[3]
How do we perform this offering? The praiseworthy qualities of the sugatas are inexhaustible like the oceans. We fully express the excellent qualities of all the victorious ones without exception through oceans of melodies of vibrant speech sung in limitless tongues.

THE BRANCH OF OFFERING

There are two sections:

1. The surpassable offering
2. The unsurpassable offering

THE SURPASSABLE OFFERING

With the finest flowers, the finest garlands,
Music, perfumes, supreme parasols,

Supreme lamps and the finest incense,
I make offering to all the victorious ones.

With the finest clothing, supreme scents,
Heaps of aromatic powders equal in size to Mount Meru and so on,
All displayed in the most sublime of arrangements,
I make offering to the victorious ones.

We make offering to the victorious ones who actually abide here and to those whom we visualize. What are the types of offerings that we make? We offer flowers of variegated colors; garlands of jewels and other precious things; sweet music from horns, drums, cymbals, and so forth; wonderfully scented perfumes; jeweled parasols protecting one from the striking heat; various precious lights; incense produced naturally or by composition; moreover fine, soft and comfortable clothing; sweet smelling liquids and aromatic substances; and masses of packages of excellently scented powders that total in size to that of Mount Meru. All of these also are made of the finest materials. They have pleasing shapes, brilliant colors and are arranged beautifully. All of these most sublime offerings are either actually set forth or emanated by mind. This is the manner of offering.

In that way, because the offerings are excellent in quality and excellently arranged, the root text uses the words "finest" and "supreme." The Vikramalashila Pandita Mangala Shri Jnana made a handwritten copy in Sanskrit that contains the following extract:

RATNAPARABHICHAHARAVARABHIH
DIVYAVICHITRAVITANAVARABHIH
SARVADHAJAGRAPATAKAPARABHIH
PUJANATESHOJINANAKAROMEH[4]

The great translator Zhalu translated this as:

Supreme jewels, supreme necklaces,
Various divine substances, supreme canopies

Here the Sanskrit word DHADZA[5] does not need a long a sound but then the verse is not correct. Another copy of the text has the word DHAJA[6] instead but still the verse is not correct. This should be analyzed further.

Supreme victory banners and supreme pennants,
All of these again I offer to the victorious ones.

Although this appears in the translation by the great lotsawa Zhalu, it does not appear in the Indian commentaries and the old Tibetan texts.

THE UNSURPASSABLE OFFERING

Through the power of respectful faith in all the victorious ones,
And through the power of trusting faith in excellent conduct,
I prostrate and make offerings unsurpassable and vast
To all the victorious ones.

The unsurpassable offerings are all the offerings emanated through the samadhi of the great aryas who have obtained accomplishment. They are unsurpassable offerings because all the other offerings of gods and men are below these. Giving rise to the motivation of supreme respectful faith in all the victorious ones who are vast in number filling all directions and times, as well as the motivation of the power of trusting faith in the limitless benefits of excellent conduct, we prostrate and make offerings to all the victorious ones and their descendants.

THE BRANCH OF CONFESSING FAULTS.

Through the power of passion, aggression and ignorance,
I have performed harmful actions
With body, speech and likewise mind.
All these actions I confess, each and every one.

By the power of being motivated by the three root causes, passion, aggression and ignorance, we engage in killing others using our bodies, lying by means of our speech, and thinking harmful thoughts with our minds. We do this directly through body, speech and mind; by urging others to do so; or by rejoicing in the misguided actions of others. Because we perform negative activities, we need to confess each of them in the presence of all the Buddhas and their descendants in accord with the confession liturgy. We do so with a mind of intense remorse and vow never to perform these negative actions again.

THE BRANCH OF REJOICING IN MERIT

I rejoice in all merits,
Those of the victorious ones and their descendant bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
Those of the Pratyekabuddhas, the Shravakas requiring practice, the arhants who no longer need practice,
And those of all beings.

We should consider the merit of all the victorious Buddhas who reside in the ten directions; the merit of their heart descendants the bodhisattvas; the merit of their descendants of speech, the Shravakas who require further practice - those who are stream enterers, those who will return in their next life and those who will not return; the merit of the arhants who no longer need to practice; the merit of the Pratyekabuddhas who practice the way of virtue; and the merit of all other individual sentient beings without exception. With a mind that takes supreme joy in all the virtuous activities that they have accomplished in the past or are about to accomplish, we rejoice in all their meritorious activities.

THE BRANCH OF REQUESTING TO TURN THE WHEEL OF DHARMA

I request all the protectors,
Those beacons of the worlds of the ten directions,
Who have traveled the stages of the path of bodhi and have reached enlightenment free from obscuration,
To turn the wheel of the unsurpassable dharma.

Those who show the path to sentient beings who wander in the darkness of ignorance and inhabit the realms of the worlds of the ten directions are the lights of the world. They are the Tathagatas, those individuals who travel all the stages of the paths and bhumis to accomplish enlightenment. Because they directly manifest the state of completely perfect enlightenment, they have attained unsurpassable wisdom that understands all that can be known. This wisdom is not subject to the obscurations of the kleshas nor the obscurations of knowledge. To all of these lords, we supplicate requesting them, "*To turn the wheel of the unsurpassable* authentic *dharma.*"

THE BRANCH OF SUPPLICATING NOT TO ENTER NIRVANA

With palms joined, I supplicate
All the Tathagatas who are planning to pass into nirvana,
To remain for as many kalpas as there are atoms in the Buddha realms,
In order to provide benefit and happiness to all sentient beings.

There are some Tathagatas who are considering passing away and completely entering nirvana in order to benefit sentient beings who require taming by nirvana.[7] Here we supplicate those Tathagatas in order to remind them of their goal which is to be the source of temporary benefit and ultimate bliss for all sentient beings. Thus we join our palms in supplication and request the Tathagatas as numerous as the atoms in all the Buddha realms without exception to remain for as long as the great kalpa.

THE BRANCH OF DEDICATION

Whatever small virtue I have accumulated,
Through prostration, offering and confession,
Rejoicing, requesting to teach, and supplicating to remain,
I dedicate entirely for the sake of enlightenment.

What is to be dedicated? It is the prostrations to a supreme object of veneration; the offering by means of the two types of offering; the confession of faults in one's own being by means of the four powers of confession,[8] rejoicing in the virtues of others; the request to turn the wheel of the dharma; and the supplication to remain not entering nirvana.

We dedicate whatever virtues we have accumulated, even the smallest virtue that we have obtained by means of the aforementioned activities. In addition we dedicate all the hosts of virtues accumulated in the three times by ourselves and others. Why do we dedicate these virtues? We do so in order that all sentient beings attain complete, great, unsurpassable enlightenment.

We do not make dedication with the notion of attaining the enlightenment of the Shravakas or Pratyekabuddhas or the bliss of samsara. Then how do we make dedication? We make dedication through unifying the non-referential prajna of the three spheres[9] with the skillful means of sublime enlightened mind.

THE MAIN PRACTICE CONSISTING OF THE VERY EXTENSIVE EXPLANATION OF THE ASPIRATION PRAYER

This has two sections:

1. The main practice
2. Consolidating the aspirations

The main section consists of sixteen topics:

1. Aspiration by means of pure intention
2. Not forgetting bodhichitta
3. Stainless practice
4. Temporary benefit and ultimate bliss
5. Wearing the armor of exertion
6. Accompanying those of the same class as friends

7. Relying on the spiritual friend
8. Offering to the Buddhas in person
9. Retaining the authentic dharma
10. Obtaining the treasury
11. Engagement
12. Power
13. Practice
14. Buddha activity
15. Following the examples
16. Concluding all the aspirations

TOPIC 1. ASPIRATION BY MEANS OF PURE INTENTION

This topic has four points.

POINT 1. THE INTENTION OF OFFERING TO THE BUDDHA.

I make offering to the Buddhas of the past
And to those who reside in the worlds of the ten directions.

Here we make limitless offerings to all the renowned Buddhas of the past as well as the Buddhas of the present who reside in the realm of the worlds of the ten directions in order to benefit sentient beings.

POINT 2. COMPLETELY FULFILLING THE INTENTION.

May those who have not yet appeared as Buddhas,
Quickly complete their intentions.
May they progress through the stages of enlightenment
And attain buddhahood.

The phrase, "those who have not appeared" refers to the Buddhas who are now in Akanishta[10] but who have not yet appeared in bodily form in order to tame disciples in this world. It also refers to the bodhisattvas who are residing at the end of the tenth bhumi and are almost enlightened. May these Buddhas and bodhisattvas quickly and without effort complete their intentions. When it is time for them to ripen disciples or complete the remaining accumulations, may they take birth in Tushita and then demonstrate progressing through the stages of attaining enlightenment

culminating in the final attainment of buddhahood. The phrase, "may they attain buddhahood" means, may the Buddhas who have attained enlightenment manifest the nirmanakaya and may the bodhisattvas quickly attain buddhahood.

POINT 3. TRANSFORMING THE REALMS INTO THE PURE REALMS OF THE BUDDHA

May the countless realms of the ten directions,
Be completely transformed into vast and completely pure realms.
May these pure realms be completely filled with Buddhas together with their son and daughter bodhisattvas,
And may each Buddha reside sitting under the greatest of all trees, the tree of bodhi.

May the impure realms – wherever they may be in the ten directions, and no matter how many there are in number – be transformed into completely pure realms vast in size and free of faults just like Sukhavati. Again may all of these pure realms be completely filled with Buddhas, each of whom is sitting under the greatest of all trees, the tree of bodhi. And may the space in between these trees be completely filled with their heart son and daughter bodhisattvas. In this way may all the worlds and their inhabitants become pure.

POINT 4. THE THOUGHT OF BENEFITING SENTIENT BEINGS

May the countless sentient beings of the ten directions
Be free from illness and enjoy happiness at all times.
May all beings who are acting in accord with the goals of the dharma
Be in harmony and may their aspirations be accomplished.

May the countless sentient beings of the ten directions be free from illness of body at all times, may their minds be free of suffering and may they possess abundant bliss. Not only that, may all beings who are acting in accord with the goals of the dharma, the cause of liberation and rebirth in the higher realms, be in harmony with one another and through the power of that may all their positive aspirations and hopes be accomplished.

TOPIC 2. THE SEVEN ASPIRATIONS DERIVED FROM NOT FORGETTING BODHICHITTA.

1. RECOLLECTING ONE'S PAST LIVES

May I perform enlightened activities
And may I recall all my previous lives.

May all our actions be in accord with aspiration and application bodhichitta so that others receive the benefit of attaining complete enlightenment. Having left this world, no matter where we are or whatever birth we have assumed, may we recall all our previous lives so that we may perform positive actions just as before.

2. BECOMING A RENUNCIATE

In all of my lives, from birth to death,
May I always be a renunciate.

In all the different circumstances of our lives, having a bodily existence within the confines of birth and death, may we always be renunciates.

3. TRAINING IN GENERAL ACTIVITIES AND PURE DISCIPLINE

Training by following the examples of all the victorious ones,
May I completely perfect excellent conduct.
May my activities and discipline be without stain and be completely pure.
May my conduct at all times be free of faults and impairments.

Just as all the victorious ones have trained, we too aspire to follow their example in our training. In general, just as all the excellent victorious ones completely perfected all the activities of the six paramitas, may we too perform this training. In particular may we keep the three disciplines without any stains of the kleshas; with a mind of peace and happiness may we be completely pure without any defilements; may we always avoid breaking our vows so that they remain uncorrupted; and may our discipline be free of the faults of clinging to the three spheres of subject, object and action. May we keep our discipline in this manner.

4. TEACHING THE DHARMA IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES

May I teach the dharma
In the language of the gods, in the language of the nagas, in the language

of the yakshas,
In the language of the kumbhandas, in the different languages of humans,
And in all the many languages spoken by sentient beings.

In order to ripen disciples, may we be able to teach the dharma in the language of the gods, in the language of the nagas, in the language of the yakshas, in the language of the kumbhandas, in other non-human tongues and in the different languages of humans. In a similar fashion, may we be able to teach the dharma in all the many languages spoken by sentient beings.

5. Exerting Oneself in Virtue

With a mind of peace, may I fully exert myself in the paramitas.

With a wise, gentle and peaceful mind, may we fully exert ourselves without regret or weariness in the training of the six paramitas.

6. Not Forgetting Bodhichitta Owing to the Five Previous Activities

May I never forget bodhichitta.

In this way by means of the five previous activities including recalling one's previous lives and so forth, may we not forget at any time or in any place the two types of bodhichitta, relative and absolute. The relative bodhichitta consists of the excellent intention to liberate all sentient beings and the absolute bodhichitta consists of abiding in equality in the wisdom of simplicity, dharmata.

7. Being Free from Adverse Conditions

May I completely purify without exception,
All harmful actions and their ensuing obscurations to liberation.

Having the harmonious condition of not forgetting bodhichitta, may we completely purify without exception all obscurations to liberation including their seeds. Such obscurations are produced by harmful and non-virtuous actions arising from the kleshas, the adverse conditions to enlightenment.

TOPIC 3. ASPIRATION BY MEANS OF STAINLESS PRACTICE OR NON-ATTACHMENT

May I be liberated from nonvirtuous actions, kleshas and the activities of the Maras that obstruct accomplishment,
And may I act for all the beings of this world,
Just like the lotus unstained by mud
And just like the beneficial sun and moon unhindered by space.

Our practice is defiled by our nonvirtuous actions; our attachment and other kleshas; and the activities of the Maras that obstruct our accomplishment in the authentic dharma. We aspire to be completely liberated or freed from these three faults.

Where can we be free of these faults? We can be free of them wherever we go and wherever the countless sentient beings of the world travel to or abide. How should we conduct ourselves? Even though we abide in samsara, we can be free from the defilements of samsara – just as the lotus growing in muddy water is not stained by mud.

The sun and moon are unhindered by space when they act to perform many benefits for others such as giving rise to and ripening herbs, trees, plants and grains, yet are free from exertion and concept. In the same way bodhisattvas are always performing benefit for other beings but do not hope for or covet something in return. May we, too, be able to act just like them.

TOPIC 4. THE ASPIRATION FOR SENTIENT BEINGS TO OBTAIN TEMPORARY BENEFIT AND ULTIMATE BLISS

May I completely pacify the suffering of the beings of the lower realms
Who in extent would fill all the directions of the Buddha fields.
May I establish all beings in happiness
And bring benefit to all.

The sentient beings of the lower realms are countless in number and would fill the entire extent and ten directions of the Buddha fields that are limitless in size. Still, may all of their sufferings and those of all sentient beings be completely pacified, and may all sentient beings attain the pure abundance of the bliss of the higher realms. May we help all beings achieve temporary benefit, and the ultimate happiness that arises through the authentic dharma of liberation.

TOPIC 5. THE ASPIRATION TO WEAR THE ARMOR OF EXERTION

May I completely perfect the activities of enlightenment

And engage in harmonious activities in order to ripen sentient beings.
May I fully teach excellent conduct
And perform the sum of the above activities throughout all future kalpas.

In order to ripen ourselves, may we don the armor of exertion and practice fully, perfecting the six paramitas that are the activities that become the seed of enlightenment. In order to ripen other sentient beings, may we gain an understanding of their personalities, interests, faculties and habits and then engage in suitable activities so that they will be tamed. Having completed those activities, may we fully teach them this dharma for excellent conduct in accord with what we have realized.

It is necessary to wear the armor of exertion in order to bring this about. In this way, may we accomplish the three benefits for ourselves and others consisting of perfecting the paramitas, engaging in harmonious activities and teaching the dharma for excellent conduct. May we do this not just for a short period of time, but during all future limitless kalpas.

Topic 6. The Aspiration to Accompany Those of the Same Class as Friends

May I always accompany
Those whose good actions are similar to mine.
May our activities and aspirations of body, speech and mind
Be one and the same.

When we train in activities that become the cause of enlightenment, may we always be inseparable with and accompany those friends who are acting in a similar manner. Having accompanied these friends may our activities of the three gates, body, speech and mind, and our aspirations be one and the same.

Topic 7. The Aspiration to Rely on and Please the Spiritual Friend

May I always meet those spiritual friends
Who wish to benefit me
And fully teach me excellent conduct.
May I never displease them.

May we always encounter and meet those authentic gurus who are spiritual friends that wish to benefit us by fully teaching the practices of excellent conduct. Having met them, may we strive to please them at all times.

TOPIC 8. THE ASPIRATION TO OFFER TO THE BUDDHAS DIRECTLY IN PERSON

At all times may I see in person the victorious ones,
Those lords who are encircled by their bodhisattvas.
Throughout all future kalpas,
May I tirelessly make a vast variety of offerings to them.

At all times may we look at and see in person the Tathagatas, those who are victorious over the nonvirtuous dharmas, those lords of beings who are completely encircled by their heart son and daughter bodhisattvas. In the process of seeing these Buddhas and their descendants in all future kalpas, may we tirelessly make a vast variety of offerings to them.

TOPIC 9. THE ASPIRATION TO FULLY RETAIN THE AUTHENTIC DHARMA

May I retain the authentic dharma of the victorious ones
And thus be able to shed light on all enlightened conduct.
Thoroughly training in excellent conduct,
May I practice it at all times in all future kalpas.

May we perfectly retain all the authentic scriptural teachings of the victorious ones. In this way may we shed light on enlightened conduct by teaching all of its different paths to all sentient beings. May we take up and practice excellent conduct ourselves. May our training increase and may it become pure in the same way sickness is dispelled. Furthermore in the future, in all limitless kalpas, may we practice excellent conduct at all times.

TOPIC 10. THE ASPIRATION BY MEANS OF OBTAINING THE INEXHAUSTIBLE TREASURY

In all my rebirths in samsara,
May I obtain inexhaustible merit and wisdom.
In this way may I become an inexhaustible treasury
Of the qualities of upaya, prajna, samadhi and liberation.

Again, in all our rebirths in the three realms of samsara may we obtain the inexhaustible accumulations of merit and wisdom through karma, aspiration, samadhi, and power. Having obtained that, may we be skilled in liberating sentient beings; and may we possess the prajna of knowing interdependence, suchness and conduct that benefits beings.

By means of the limitless samadhi of the treasury of space and so forth, the eight aspects of liberation,[11] the three samadhis[12] and the like, may we

abandon the three obscurations and obtain the wisdom of complete liberation. May we obtain the inexhaustible treasury of all limitless excellent qualities arising from these.

TOPIC 11. THE ASPIRATION BY MEANS OF THE VARIETY OF THE EIGHT ACTIVITIES

1. THE ACTIVITY OF SEEING THE BUDDHAS AND THEIR REALMS

Within a single atom, may I see all the countless Buddha realms.
Within each of these realms may I see the incomprehensible Buddhas
Residing with their son and daughter bodhisattvas.
As they perform enlightened activities may I do so along with them.
Then, in each of the realms in all directions, may space even the size of a tip of a hair
Be filled with realms the size of oceans containing oceans of Buddhas of the three times.
May I fully engage in enlightened conduct together with the Buddhas throughout oceans of kalpas.

Within one single atom, may we see all the realms of the Buddhas, as countless in number as all the atoms in the universe. In each of these realms may there reside an inconceivable numbers of Buddhas surrounded by their heart son and daughter bodhisattvas. While seeing their forms and listening to their speech, may we act together with them as they perform their enlightened activities.

In order to gain perseverance in realizing the unborn dharma of emptiness, we increase the scope of these realms. Just as we arranged the realms of the victorious ones in a single atom, we proceed to fill all the realms in all directions. Space, even the size of a tip of a single hair will then contain oceans of inexhaustible numbers of Buddhas equal in number to all the Tathagatas of the three times, past, present and future. Also each of these pure realms will be limitless in size just like the oceans. May we engage in enlightened activities, seeing the faces of the Buddhas in each of the pure realms for kalpas as inexhaustible as all the atoms in the oceans.

2. THE ACTIVITY OF LISTENING TO THE SPEECH OF THE BUDDHAS

Every single teaching of the Buddha appears in languages having oceans of qualities.
It has the qualities of the pure melodic speech of all the victorious ones
And harmoniously satisfies the different wishes of all sentient beings.
May I always listen to the speech of the Buddhas.

Every single teaching of the Buddha naturally appears in countless languages having oceans of different qualities. Each teaching is complete with the distinctive qualities of the pure melodic speech of all the victorious ones. The Buddha's speech harmoniously fulfills all the individual desires of all beings without exception, no matter what teachings they desire or wish to hear. Effortlessly and without obstruction, may we always be able to listen to and understand the limitless speech of all the Buddhas.

3. The Activity of Entering into the Teachings of the Dharma

All the victorious Tathagatas of the three times
Have fully turned the wheel of the dharma.
May I, through the power of mind, fully enter into
The inexhaustible melodious speech of all the victorious ones.

All the victorious ones of the three times, those who have gone before, those who are here now, and those of the future, have fully turned the wheel of the dharma in different ways for disciples. May we fully enter into the speech of the Buddhas through the power of mind's ability to instantly listen to all the inexhaustible melodies of the Buddhas' teachings.

4. The Activities Performed over Kalpas

Just as the Buddhas enter into wisdom in all future kalpas
May I too enter into such wisdom in this very instant.
Combining the entire extent of all the kalpas of the three times
Into a fraction of a single instant, may I perform enlightened conduct wherever I may be.

In all the countless future kalpas the Buddhas will enter into wisdom without the two obscurations. In the same manner may we too instantaneously enter into that wisdom. In that manner, through the power of combining the entire extent of the three times of the past, present and future kalpas into a fraction of a single instant, may we have no obscuration wherever we may be in performing enlightened conduct.

5. The Activity of Seeing the Tathagatas

In this very instant may I see
All the lions of men and women, the Tathagatas of the three times.

May we fully see in this very instant all the lions of men and women, the bhagavat Buddhas of the three times past, present and future. May we always engage in seeing the Tathagatas.

6. The Activity of Realizing the Objects of Experience of the Tathagatas

May I at all times realize the liberation of the Tathagatas that sees
All objects of experience as illusion.

May we at all times realize the wisdom that is free from complexity within the equipoise of the incomprehensible display of the objects of experience of the Tathagatas. By doing so, may we transform appearances into illusion[13] in post-meditation and thus engage in being completely liberated from obscurations.

7. The Activity of Establishing the Pure Realms

May I make the Buddha realms of the three times
Manifest within a single atom.
May I then make each atom in all directions without exception
Manifest all the pure realms of the victorious ones.

Through the power of intention, aspiration and miracle, may we make the Buddha realms of the three times, past, present and future manifest directly within a single minute atom. May we then make each atom of the universe at all times and in all directions manifest the pure realms of the victorious ones.

8. The Activity of Going into the Presence of the Tathagatas

May I go into the presence of all the present and future lords,
Those beacons who illuminate the world,
Who demonstrate stage by stage the attainment of enlightenment,
Who turn the wheel of the dharma,
And who attain the ultimate complete peace of nirvana.

Consider the Buddhas of the present and future, those beacons who illuminate the world. They demonstrate stage by stage the individual activities of gaining enlightenment, turning the wheel of the dharma, and attaining the ultimate complete peace of nirvana. May we go into the presence of all of these Tathagatas simultaneously, and having done so may we assist them in performing all their activities.

TOPIC 12: THE ASPIRATION BY WAY OF THE VARIOUS POWERS

By way of the power of altogether swift miracles,
The power of the vehicle that traverses the path of complete benefit,
The power of conduct having all excellent qualities,
The power of all pervasive loving kindness,
The power of all virtuous merit,
The power of wisdom that is free from attachment,
And the powers of prajna, upaya and samadhi,
May I perfectly accomplish the power of enlightenment.

The powers are as follows:

1. The power of altogether swift miracles, such as being able to travel without hindrance to different pure realms instantaneously;

2. The power of the vehicle, such as the excellent horse of bodhichitta, that traverses the path of completely benefiting all sentient beings by employing limitless different skillful means;

3. The power of conduct, having all excellent qualities such as meditative stabilization that is accompanied by the various excellent qualities of the six paramitas, the four ways of magnetizing, the four immeasurables and so forth; and the totalities[14] and masteries such as higher perception;

4. The power of the four immeasurables such as all pervasive loving kindness to all sentient beings brought about through the consideration of benefit and happiness;

5. The power of merit such as generosity and so forth, the activities that are always virtuous in the beginning, middle and end;

6. The power of omniscient wisdom that is free from attachment to and is not hindered by phenomena of the three times;

7. The power of prajna that realizes the fundamental nature of the way things are;

8. The power of upaya that accomplishes benefit for others; and

9. The power of one-pointed samadhi that is the cause of excellent qualities such as higher perception, miracles and so forth.

Through these nine powers may we perfectly accomplish the special power of wisdom that allows us to quickly attain unsurpassable enlightenment.

TOPIC 13. THE ASPIRATION TO PRACTICE AND APPLY ANTIDOTES

May I completely purify the power of karma,
May I fully subjugate the power of the kleshas,
May I render the power of the Maras powerless,
And may I perfect the power of excellent conduct.

May we completely purify the power of karma that leads us into samsara. May we fully defeat and subjugate the power of the kleshas such as passion and so forth that disturb the three gates of body, speech and mind. Among the four obstructing Maras is Kleshamara that was discussed earlier along with the other three Maras. By subduing the power of the other three Maras we no longer see the nature of the skandhas as truly existent; we see the nature of mind free from birth and death; and we purify attachment to objects. In this way may we subjugate karma, kleshas and the powers of the Maras and fully engage in the power of excellent conduct. Through these skillful means may we attain enlightenment.

TOPIC 14. THE ASPIRATION TO PERFORM BUDDHA ACTIVITY

May I completely purify oceans of realms,
Completely liberate oceans of sentient beings,
Fully see oceans of dharmas,
Fully realize oceans of wisdom,
Perform oceans of excellent activities completely purifying all faults,
Fully complete oceans of aspirations,
And fully offer to oceans of Buddhas.
May I perform all of these activities without weariness throughout oceans of kalpas.

May we completely purify the oceans of realms as pervasive as space making their ground, trees and so forth excellent and precious. In these realms, may we completely liberate the oceans of sentient beings from suffering and obscurations. May we fully see the oceans of dharma of scriptures and realization with the completely pure eye of prajna. May we instantly and fully realize the oceans of wisdom that directly see the dharma of reality just as it is and in its full extent.

May we act with oceans of skillful means that benefit ourselves and others and through this excellent conduct may all faults be purified. May we fully complete and bring to fruition oceans of aspirations that focus on benefiting

ourselves and others. May we fully offer all offerings to the oceans of countless Buddhas. May we perform these seven activities including purifying the realms and so forth with complete joy and without weariness throughout oceans of limitless kalpas.

TOPIC 15. THE ASPIRATION TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLES OF THE BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS

There are two aspirations here. The first is to follow the example of the Buddhas and the second, to follow the example of the bodhisattvas.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE BUDDHAS

All the victorious ones of the three times
Have made multitudes of enlightened aspirations.
May I become an enlightened Buddha through performing excellent conduct,
Thereby completing all of their aspirations without exception.

The countless victorious ones of the three times of the past, present and future have made from beginningless time, an incomprehensible multitude of aspirations to perform enlightened conduct. May we attain unsurpassable enlightenment through performing excellent conduct, thereby completing all of their aspirations without exception.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE TWO SUPREME BODHISATTVAS

THE EXAMPLE OF SAMANTABHADRA

The principal son of all the victorious ones
Is the individual named Samantabhadra.
In order to act in the same manner as this master,
I fully dedicate all my virtuous activity.
I also make dedication for pure body, speech and mind,
For pure conduct, and for the complete purification of the realms.
May I be just like the master
In making this excellent dedication.

Among all the sons of the victorious one, the principal one was renowned as Samantabhadra, the All Excellent One. In order to perform the activities of the great bodhisattvas in the same manner as this accomplished master, we will fully dedicate all our virtuous activity. What do we gain through dedication? By means of performing dedication we are able to display countless forms for those who need to be tamed. By performing dedication

we are able to teach in one melodic voice that is expressed in all the countless languages of beings. Not only that, we are able to place our minds in the countless entryways of nonconceptual samadhi. In this way we are able to completely purify our three gates and will not be trampled by the activities that are not in harmony with the six paramitas since such activities are completely purified. We also are able to completely purify the impure realms. Thus, may we be just like the master Samantabhadra in making excellent dedication in order to gain these five purities.

THE EXAMPLE OF MANJUSHRI

In order to practice the excellent conduct of the all virtuous dharmas,
May my aspirations be the same as those of Manjushri.
In all future kalpas, may I be without weariness in completing
All the activities of Manjushri.

In order to practice the excellent conduct of the all virtuous dharma in the beginning, middle and end, may our aspirations be identical with those of supreme noble Manjushri. May we make these aspirations of the victorious ones and their descendants in all future limitless kalpas without weariness and with delight. In so doing, may we complete, without exception, all the desired activities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

TOPIC 16. THE TEACHINGS ON DEDICATION BY WAY OF CONCLUDING ALL THE ASPIRATIONS

May my paramita activities be immeasurable.
May my excellent qualities be immeasurable.
Having performed immeasurable activities,
May I attain all the manifestations of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

May our activities of generosity and the other paramitas be immeasurable. Owing to that, may the excellent qualities of retention, courage and so forth, arise immeasurably. Having performed immeasurable activities and having developed immeasurable excellent qualities, may we attain all the manifestations of body, speech and mind of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. This completes the explanation of the different divisions of the aspirations of the main section.

CONSOLIDATING THE ASPIRATIONS

Just as space is without limit
So too are all sentient beings.

Just as their karma and kleshas are without limit,
So, too, may my aspirations be without limit.

When attempting to measure the limits of space in any of the ten directions, one finds that space is without limit. And since space can be filled with sentient beings, there is no limit to the number of sentient beings. Just as sentient beings are limitless, so too are their karma and kleshas. Just as their karma and kleshas are without limit, so too may our aspirations be without limit.

THE CONCLUSION THAT TEACHES THE BENEFITS

There are two sections:

1. The explanation of the benefits of aspiration
2. Dedicating the aspirations that possess benefit

THE EXPLANATION OF THE BENEFITS OF ASPIRATION

There are three sections:

1. The brief explanation
2. The detailed explanation
3. The conclusion

THE BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE BENEFITS OF ASPIRATION

Individuals could offer limitless realms of the ten directions
Ornamented with precious jewels to the victorious ones.
They could also offer substances of gods and humans producing supreme delight.
They could make these offerings in numbers as countless as atoms in all the realms over many kalpas.
However, if they were to listen to this king of dedication prayers,
Be motivated to supreme enlightenment,
And then give rise to faith even a single time,
The merit gained would be even more sublime.

We could offer the vast realms of all the ten directions ornamented with varieties of precious jeweled offerings to the victorious ones. Not only that; we could offer material substances of gods and humans that produce supreme

delight in each of the individual senses such as beautiful forms, melodic sounds, fragrant scents, sweet tastes and other limitless desirable qualities. In addition we could offer these in numbers as countless as the atoms in the realms of the ten directions and without interruption over the time period of kalpas.

On the other hand, we could listen to this King of Dedication Prayers and contemplate its meaning. Having done so, we could be motivated to supreme unsurpassable enlightenment and give rise to certainty. In addition, we could give rise to clear faith time and time again. However, even if we were to give rise to such clear faith only a single time, the ensuing merit would be greater, more sublime and more supreme than the merit gained by making the material offerings.

THE DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE BENEFITS OF ASPIRATION

If I make this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
I will abandon all rebirths in the lower realms.
I will be free from associating with inappropriate friends
And will quickly see the Buddha Amitabha.
I will completely obtain the supreme attainments,
I will be happy in this life,
And in this present life everything will go well.
In aspiring to be like Samantabhadra,
I will be just like him in a short period of time.
If I perform the five inexpiable sins out of ignorance,
When I recite this Prayer for Excellent Conduct,
I will quickly and completely purify them.
I will attain wisdom, have a beautiful body, possess the major and minor marks,
Be born into an excellent family and be radiant in appearance.
The Maras and tirthikas will not be able to harm me,
And all beings of the three worlds will make offerings to me.
I will quickly go before the Bodhi tree,
And abiding there I will be able to benefit sentient beings.
Having subdued the Maras and their troops,
I will attain enlightenment and fully turn the wheel of the dharma.

If we through abundant faith exert ourselves in making aspiration by means of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct, then we will gradually attain the following thirteen benefits:

1. We will abandon all rebirths in the lower realms that are due to the power of karma.

2. In this life and all future lives we will be free from associating with or encountering inappropriate friends who perform negative actions.

3. Not only will we abandon the lower realms and inappropriate friends, but we will quickly see the Buddha Amitabha and his pure realm Sukhavati in this life and then take rebirth there in the next life.

4. If we exert ourselves in this aspiration then we will enjoy harmonious circumstances without applying effort and will accomplish activities of great meaning. Therefore we will completely obtain the supreme attainments.

5. As long as we are alive, we will be free from harm and our activities will be excellent and virtuous. Thus we will be happy in this life.

6. Our present life will be meaningful and everything will go well.

7. Not only will we obtain the previous six benefits, but in aspiring to be just like the bodhisattva Samantabhadra in terms of his qualities, manifestations and so forth, we will end up being just like him in a short period of time.

8. Generally when we perform the five inexpiable sins, we go directly to hell avoiding respite in an intervening place between this life and the next. These five sins are killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an arhant, spreading strife in the sangha and spilling the blood of a Tathagata with evil intent. Owing to the power of ignorance, we are unaware that such deeds are faults. No matter whom we may be and no matter what harmful actions we may have performed, if we recite this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct with heart-felt faith, we will quickly and completely purify all the resulting karma without exception.

9. If we make this aspiration we will obtain abundant wisdom that is the seed of the nonconceptual wisdom of the noble ones.

10. On taking rebirth we will obtain a body that is of abundant beauty, we will possess the major and minor marks and we will be reborn in a good family such as a supremely noble family. Our beautiful bodies will be radiant in appearance (or here the root text containing the Sanskrit word VARNA may mean that we will be reborn into a family having excellent qualities).

11. Even though there may be many trying to obstruct us such as Maras, tirthikas and so forth, when we make this aspiration they will not be able to harm or defeat us.

12. If we make this aspiration we will receive offerings from, be respected by and obtain benefit from all sentient beings in all the three worlds of activity – the naga realm, the human realm, and the celestial realm.

13. If we fully accomplish this aspiration we will complete the two accumulations; we will quickly go before the Bodhi tree; having gone there we will abide under the tree in order to benefit all sentient beings; having subdued all the Maras and their troops we will completely manifest unsurpassable enlightenment; and having attained enlightenment we will turn the wheel of the dharma.

THE CONCLUSION

If I keep this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct with me
Chant or read it,
I will gain the complete fruition only known by the Buddhas,
The attainment of supreme enlightenment – of this there is no doubt!

The individual who understands the words and meaning of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct; who makes a copy of it and keeps it close; who chants it daily or teaches it to others; or simply even reads it will gain incomprehensible complete fruition. Such fruition is only known by the Buddhas. It is not within the sphere of experience of the Shravaka and Pratyekabuddha arhants, needless to say ordinary sentient beings. The ultimate fruition is the complete attainment of supreme enlightenment. Such enlightenment will most certainly be attained – of this there is no doubt!

DEDICATING THE ASPIRATIONS THAT POSSESS BENEFIT

This has five sections:

1. Performing the dedications that are made by the supreme bodhisattvas
2. Performing the dedications that are made by the victorious ones
3. The dedication to make manifest the fruition of this aspiration
4. The dedication to receive prophecy directly from the Buddha
5. Having received prophecy, the dedication to perform benefit for sentient beings

PERFORMING THE DEDICATIONS THAT ARE MADE BY THE SUPREME BODHISATTVAS

Just as Manjushri has supreme knowledge
So too, has Samantabhadra.
In order to follow in the footsteps of these supreme bodhisattvas,
I fully dedicate all the virtue arising from making this aspiration.

Noble Manjushri subjugated clinging to substantial existence by means of supreme prajna. He is the daka[15] who serves to benefit beings. Noble Samantabhadra is just like him in terms of comprehension and understanding. May we follow in the footsteps of all of the supreme bodhisattvas and train just like they did. Through such motivation, we fully dedicate whatever virtues arise from making this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct.

PERFORMING THE DEDICATIONS THAT ARE MADE BY THE VICTORIOUS ONES

With dedications that are praised as supreme
By all the victorious ones of the three times,
I fully dedicate all of my roots of virtues
In order that all beings attain the conduct of Samantabhadra.

With excellent and vast dedications praised as supreme by the single voice of all the victorious ones of the three times who perform benefit for sentient beings, we fully dedicate all the roots of virtue that arise from making this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct. We do this in order that all beings attain the conduct of Samantabhadra.

THE DEDICATION TO MAKE MANIFEST THE FRUITION OF THIS ASPIRATION

At the time of my death,
May all my obscurations be dispelled.
Having seen Buddha Amitabha in person,
May I instantly go to the pure realm of Sukhavati.

Having gone there may all the fruitions
Of making this Aspiration Prayer fully manifest.
May all of my wishes and those of others be completely fulfilled,
And may I benefit sentient beings as long as worlds exist.

At the time of our deaths, may all the general obscurations due to karma and kleshas and the particular obstructions to seeing enlightenment be dispelled so that we are free from them all. May we see the Buddha Amitabha in person and having seen him may our many obscurations again be purified so that we may proceed through the various entryways into samadhi. While not moving from that, may we instantly go to the pure realm of Sukhavati and having gone there, may we take miraculous birth on a lotus. May all the fruitions of making this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct become fully manifest. May all these fruitions of aspiration completely fulfill our wishes and those of others. May we perform benefit for all sentient beings as long as worlds exist.

THE DEDICATION TO RECEIVE PROPHECY DIRECTLY FROM THE BUDDHA

In that joyous realm having the excellent qualities of the mandala
of victorious Amitabha,
May I take birth on a beautiful lotus.
May victorious Amitabha appear to me in person,
And may I receive a prophecy from him.

In the pure land that is excellently ornamented with all the qualities of the mandala of victorious Amitabha and retinue where through the power of inner samadhi and outer aspiration happiness is abundantly present, may I take birth on the anthers of a beautiful jeweled lotus. May the victorious Amitabha appear to me in person prophesying, "You will appear in such and such a realm, at such and such a time, and will become such and such a Buddha," and may I receive this prophecy within his mandala.

HAVING RECEIVED PROPHECY, THE DEDICATION TO PERFORM BENEFIT FOR SENTIENT BEINGS

Having fully received this prophecy in Sukhavati,
May I emanate many billions of emanations,
And through my intent, may a multitude of benefits
Be performed for sentient beings in the ten directions.

Having fully received the prophecy in the pure realm of Sukhavati, may we emanate many billions of emanations. Through our single minded intent, may these limitless emanations then perform benefit for others. May limitless sentient beings be protected from suffering in every instant in all the realms of the worlds of the ten directions. In the end may we establish sentient

beings stage by stage in the bliss of the higher realms and the three types of enlightenment of nirvana. During all this time may we perform a multitude of benefits for sentient beings as long as samsara exists.

After these root verses there are two stanzas starting with, "Through whatever small virtue I have accumulated by reciting this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct..."

These verses are not in the Gandavyuha sutra and in many of the Indian commentaries. However, Mangala Shri Jnana's text contains these verses in his handwriting. They also are explained in the Indian commentary of Shakya Shenyen and by the great Tibetan Lotsawa Yeshe De. Thus many scholars say that these must be verses in this sutra.

This Aspiration Prayer in the Gandavyuha Sutra has sixty slokas and if these two slokas are added, there are sixty two slokas. This will depend on the particular Indian text.

The last verse beginning with, "Through this king of aspiration prayers" has to be explained separately as it only appears in Tibetan volumes and does not appear in this sutra or Indian commentaries. It is said that this verse was composed by the great Lotsawa Vairocana as a translation aspiration and I am in agreement with this.

If I comment on these three slokas a little further, there are three topics.

1. Chanting the aspiration
2. Dedicating the aspiration
3. Dedicating the root of virtue of the aspiration

Chanting the Aspiration

Through whatever small virtue I have accumulated
By reciting this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct,
May all the positive wishes of sentient beings
And all positive results be accomplished instantly.

Through whatever small virtue I have accumulated by reading or chanting the text of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct, may all sentient beings without exception accomplish their wishes. May the positive results stemming from reciting this aspiration be obtained instantly without effort.

DEDICATING THE ASPIRATION

The merit obtained through the dedication of this aspiration prayer
for excellent conduct
Is limitless and authentic.
By whatever merit I have so obtained,
May all sentient beings drowning in the river of suffering
Gain complete rebirth in the realm of Sukhavati.

The merit produced by the complete dedication of this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct is excellent because it is authentic and vast because it is limitless. May whatever such merit I have obtained serve to help beings who are drowning in the river of suffering. May they gain complete rebirth in the realm of Sukhavati, the pure realm of the Tathagata Amitabha, where beings are at all times blissful and happy.

DEDICATING THE ROOT OF VIRTUE OF THE ASPIRATION

Through this king of aspiration prayers
May all sentient beings receive benefit and attain the greatest of all attainments.
By accomplishing this aspiration prayer taught by Samantabhadra and ornamented
with Buddha activity,
May the lower realms be completely emptied of beings.

Through this king of aspiration prayers, may all sentient beings as limitless as space attain the greatest of all attainments, unsurpassable enlightenment. May they receive temporary and ultimate benefit and bliss. May they all arrive at the special pure realm ornamented with the aspiration of Samantabhadra. The majority of the root texts say "accomplishing this aspiration prayer." This refers to accomplishment that is just in accord with the teachings of this aspiration prayer, the great sutra. This aspiration prayer taught by Samantabhadra is fully ornamented with profound and vast words and meaning connected with the limitless activities of the Tathagatas and their descendents. By accomplishing this aspiration prayer, may all the lower realms of the ten directions be completely emptied of beings.

5 The Concluding Chapter

The Aspiration Prayer for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones is complete.

The root text now says, "The Aspiration Prayer for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones is complete," meaning that the aspiration prayer has now come to an end. One of the Indian texts says, ARYA-SAMANTABHADRA CHARYA-PRANIDHANA-RAJA-SAMASTAMA.[16] This means, "The Aspiration Prayer for the Excellent Conduct of Noble Samantabhadra is complete." After that the text says:

EKA-GATHA-CHATUR-GARBA-GATHA-DVATIYA-DHARANA
SHAD-MUKHI-BHADRACHARYA CHA PANCHA-MUDRAH
PRAKARTITA

Translated, this means:

One verse, four verses,
And two verses are dharani.[17]
The six gates and the excellent activities,
These are renowned as the five mudras.

Colophon

This excellent commentary miraculously opens the gate to the wondrous profound and vast aspiration that serves to enter beings into the limitless activities of the supreme noble ones. By this merit may all beings accomplish the supreme excellent conduct of Samantabhadra.

This text called, "The Gate of Entry into the Limitless Activities of the Supreme Noble Ones. A Short Commentary on the Aspiration Prayer for the Excellent Conduct of the Noble Ones" was requested by Mati Sarasvati, the chief attendant of Gyaltsab Choggi Tulku. Dharma Shri, a bhikshu of the

Myos family, composed this at Ugyen Mindroling monastery on the 10th festival day of the five month of the Iron Snake year. Shubhamstu. Virtue. Sarva Mangalam.

6 Auspicious Verses

The thousand-spoked gold wheel of the Kama and Terma,
Turns majestically in the space of the teachings of the supreme yana.
May I spontaneously accomplish the vajra diamond energy of the deity of utmost respect, the regent of the family of Padma, Garwang Gyurme Dorje.[18]

On this earth is the second Akanishta abode of the dakinis of Ugyen,
The Ati Ling of ripening and freeing, Mindrolling,
The great pleasure grove of definitive meaning.
May it spread and flourish in all directions and times.

May the Buddhas come to this world realm.
May the sunlight of their teachings be brilliant.
May the dharma practitioners be in harmony like brothers and sisters.
And in this way, may the auspiciousness of the teachings be present
for a long time.

7 Outline

1. Beginning chapter
    1.1. The meaning of the title
    1.2. The translator's homage
2. Middle chapter
    2.1. The preliminary seven branch prayer that purifies one's being
        2.1.1. Prostration
            2.1.1.1. The brief discussion
            2.1.1.2. The detailed discussion
                2.1.1.2.1. Body
                2.1.1.2.2. Mind
                2.1.1.2.3. Speech
        2.1.2. Offering
            2.1.2.1. The surpassable offering
            2.1.2.2. The unsurpassable offering
        2.1.3. Confession
        2.1.4. Rejoicing
        2.1.5. Requesting to teach the dharma
        2.1.6. Asking to remain
        2.1.7. Dedication
    2.2. The main practice consisting of the very extensive explanation of the aspiration prayer
        2.2.1. The main practice
            2.2.1.1. Aspiration by means of pure intention
                2.2.1.1.1. The intention of offering to the Buddha
                2.2.1.1.2. Completely fulfilling the intention

2.2.1.1.3. Transforming the realms into the pure realms of the Buddha

2.2.1.1.4. The thought of benefiting sentient beings

2.2.1.2. Not forgetting bodhichitta

2.2.1.2.1. Recollecting one's past lives

2.2.1.2.2. Becoming a monastic

2.2.1.2.3. Training in general activities and pure discipline

2.2.1.2.4. Teaching the dharma in various languages

2.2.1.2.5. Exerting oneself in virtue

2.2.1.2.6. Not forgetting bodhichitta owing to the five previous activities

2.2.1.2.7. Being free from adverse conditions

2.2.1.3. Stainless practice

2.2.1.4. Temporary benefit and ultimate bliss

2.2.1.5. Wearing the armor of exertion

2.2.1.6. Accompanying those of the same class as friends

2.2.1.7. Relying on the spiritual friend

2.2.1.8. Offering to the Buddhas in person

2.2.1.9. Retaining the authentic dharma

2.2.1.10. Obtaining the treasury

2.2.1.11. Activities

2.2.1.11.1. The activity of seeing the Buddhas and their realms

2.2.1.11.2. The activity of listening to the speech of the Buddhas

2.2.1.11.3. The activity of entering into the teachings of the dharma

2.2.1.11.4. The activities performed over kalpas

2.2.1.11.5. The activity of seeing the Tathagatas

2.2.1.11.6. The activity of realizing the objects of experience of the Tathagatas

2.2.1.11.7. The activity of establishing the pure realms

2.2.1.11.8. The activity of going into the presence of the Tathagatas

2.2.1.12. Power

2.2.1.13. Practice

2.2.1.14. Buddha activity

2.2.1.15. Following the examples

2.2.1.15.1. Following the example of the Buddhas

2.2.1.15.2. Following the example of the two supreme bodhisattvas

2.2.1.16. Concluding all the aspirations

2.2.2. Consolidating the aspirations

2.3. The conclusion that teaches the benefits

2.3.1. The explanation of the benefits of aspiration

2.3.1.1. The brief explanation

2.3.1.2. The detailed explanation

2.3.1.3. The conclusion

2.3.2. Dedicating the aspirations that possess benefit

2.3.2.1. Performing the dedications that are made by the supreme bodhisattvas

2.3.2.2. Performing the dedications that are made by the victorious ones

2.3.2.3. The dedication to make manifest the fruition of this aspiration

2.3.2.4. The dedication to receive prophecy directly from the Buddha

2.3.2.5. Having received prophecy, the dedication to perform benefit for sentient beings

3. The concluding chapter

3.1. Colophon

3.2. Author's dedication

8 About the Author

Lochen Dharmashri lived from 1654 to 1717. He received the refuge and bodhichitta vows as well as vajrayana empowerments from his elder brother, the first Mindrolling Trichen, Terdak Lingpa, who was his principal teacher. He received his monastic vows from the Fifth Dalai Lama. Lochen Dharmashri was renowned as a great scholar and was the author of twenty four volumes of collected works containing commentaries on the sutras and tantras. In particular he wrote well-known commentaries on the Guhyagarbha Tantra.

9 Endnotes

[1] The Garland of Flowers

[2] The Arrangement of Trees

[3] Sugata literally means blissfully gone one and refers to a Buddha.

[4] Appears as vastra-varebhi cha gandha-varebhish-churna-putebhi cha meru-samebhih sarva-vishishta-viyuha-varebhih pujana tesha jinana karomi in the Sanskrit version of the sutra from P.L. Vaidya, Mithila Institute, 1960.

[5] We have used the word DHAJA for DHADZA

[6] This may be the Sanskrit word DHVAJA meaning banner.

[7] Some sentient beings are attached to permanence and thus must be shown nirvana.

[8] The four powers of confessing misdeeds refer to the power of reliance, the power of remorse, the power of resolve and the power of applying the antidote. The power of reliance is to take refuge and engender bodhichitta. The power of remorse is to feel remorse for one's previous misdeeds. The power of resolve is to resolve not to perform misdeeds once again. The power of applying the antidote is to practice the six paramitas including generosity, discipline, patience, exertion, meditation and wisdom.

[9] The three spheres refer to subject, object and action. From the Buddhist point of view the three spheres are fabricated by mind. If one examines and analyzes the notions of subject, object and action, they have no fundamental existence.

[10] Akanishta is the highest pure realm or buddhafield.

[11] The eight aspects of liberation consist of liberation from seeing forms as solid form; liberation from seeing the formless to have solid form; liberation from being

attached to beauty; the four liberations from being caught in the four formless states of absorption; and the liberation from cessation.

[12] The three samadhis refer to the suchness samadhi, the all-illuminating samadhi and the seed samadhi. The suchness samadhi is connected with meditation on emptiness. The all-illuminating samadhi is connected with meditation on compassion like the sun which illuminates everywhere. The seed samadhi is connected with the meditation on a seed syllable such as HUM.

[13] From a Buddhist point of view, it is helpful to understand that our typical day to day experiences are not considered to be fundamental truths. Instead such experiences are thought to be similar in character to dreams or illusions. For example, one can question whether the fleeting happiness or sadness we experience in our day to day lives is fundamentally different in character from the fleeting happiness or sadness we experience in a dream or while watching a movie.

[14] Refers to the ten totalities of earth, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white, space and consciousness.

[15] Daka means hero or warrior.

[16] Probably samapta meaning complete, finished.

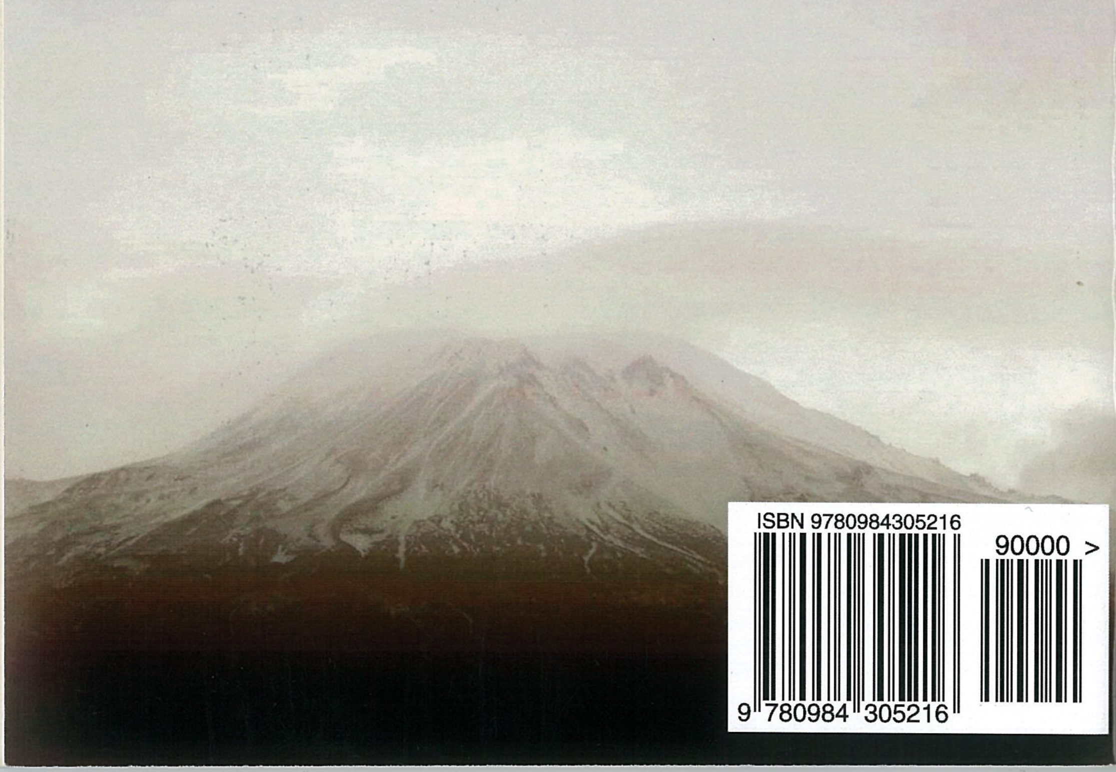
[17] Dharani literally means that which holds. Here it may refer to mantra or retention.

[18] This is the root guru of Dharma Shri. He's also his brother.

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This commentary by the great scholar Lochen Dharmashri elucidates the meaning of The King of Aspiration Prayers practiced by all the different sects of Tibetan Buddhism. It is said in the aspiration prayer, "If I make this aspiration prayer for excellent conduct, I will abandon all rebirths in the lower realms. I will be free from associating with inappropriate friends and will quickly see the Buddha Amitabha."



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